#1399439047 ID: 88077504 HD 170 .C46 1993 no.12

The Bureau of Land Management Service Center Newsletter December 1993

CENTER SCENE

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES IN STORE FOR SC IRM

On November 10, incoming Service Center Director Larry Bembry announced a reorganization of the Information Resource Management (IRM) functions at the Service Center. The reorganization will affect the ALMRS/Modernization Project Office (SC-310), the Division of Project Management (SC-320), and the Division of Systems Operations/Maintenance and Support Services (SC-340).

The reorganization is the result of decisions from the *IRM Modernization Issue Paper*. The paper was based on a review conducted by Associate Director of Management Services and ALMRS/Modernization Project Sponsor Tom Allen, Washington Office Management Analyst Judith Herrington, and New Mexico Associate State Director Monte Jordan. According to a memo from BLM Director Jim Baca, these changes will reduce management layering, streamline the organization, and provide for the most efficient operations.

The organizational option chosen by Director Baca:

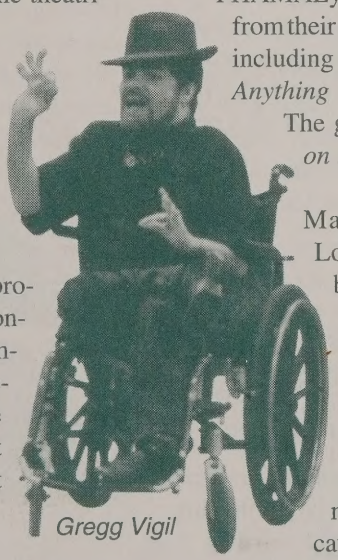
- Makes Service Center IRM functions a Washington Office entity until the ALMRS/Modernization Project is over
- Has Service Center IRM functions reporting to Monte Jordan at the Service Center, who will be accountable to Tom Allen in Washington
- Establishes a separate Budget Officer for the IRM functions
- Combines configuration management, life cycle management, and quality assurance functions in one unit that is accountable to top management
- Allows functions that support the Service Center, such as user support, computer operations, network administration/support, some applications support, and telecommunications/telephone support, to continue to report to the Service Center

The Washington Division of IRM will also be reorganized at this time. Though some fine tuning of the options chosen is expected, personnel actions are already underway and the new organization will be implemented as soon as possible. Director Baca feels this new organization provides the best combination to support successful implementation of Modernization within the timeframes agreed to by the Department of the Interior, the Office of Management and Budget, and Congress.

THEATRICAL GROUP PERFORMS

Service Center employees observed National Disability Employment Awareness Month with a special program in November. The program was sponsored by Disabled Employee Program Manager Sandy Dilbeck and featured the theatrical group PHAMALy.

PHAMALy, or the Physically Handicapped Amateur Musical Actors' League, Inc., is a nonprofit organization that enables physically challenged performers to showcase their talents and abilities. PHAMALy is dedicated to producing traditional theater in a nontraditional manner. After members have completed a production with PHAMALy, they are better prepared to branch out into the theater community at large.



Gregg Vigil

For this program, PHAMALy performed a musical reflection of their history, entitled *PHAMALy Chronicles*. Service Center employee Tina Logsdon, a member of PHAMALy, provided narration describing the origins, stumbling blocks, and accomplishments of the group over the past 5 years. This narration was embellished by other PHAMALy members performing songs from their annual musical productions, including *Guys & Dolls, Oklahoma, Anything Goes,* and *Kiss Me Kate*. The group will perform *Fiddler on the Roof* next July.

Acting Equal Employment Manager Annisteen Pack-Lovelace closed the ceremony by inviting employees to take part in a workgroup to meet with those who have disabilities and discuss their needs. "No one knows when they may be hit with a disability," Annisteen reminded everyone. "Just because someone may not have the use of an arm or leg or can't see doesn't have anything to do with their intelligence or how they feel as a human being—they deserve our respect."

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THE PEOPLE OF SC-320

This month, *Center Scene* takes a look at the real people behind the faces in the Division of Project Management (SC-320). With a division staff, two branches, five sections, and eight projects, the nearly 70-person Division comprises an interesting mix of personalities, tastes, and talents.

Heros

There were some inspiring influences in the early lives of SC-320 employees, including cartoons. Among favorite cartoon characters were:

Woody Woodpecker
Road Runner
Bullwinkle
Mickey Mouse
Goofy
Captain Marvel
The Black Hawks
Johnny Quest
Ricochet Rabbit
Deputy Dog

Ice Cream

Most of the staff members don't watch their favorite cartoons anymore, but they almost unanimously still love ice cream. A poll of favorite ice cream flavors revealed a strong preference for chocolate, followed by nuts, then fruit. Favorite flavors include:

Chocolate
Decadent double chocolate
Chocolate cappucino
Mint chocolate chip
Chocolate almond
Mocha almond fudge
Burnt almond
Pistachio
Strawberry
Banana
Peach

First Jobs

Past experiences have helped shape SC-320 employees into what they are today. In that light, here are some interesting "first jobs" held by staff members:

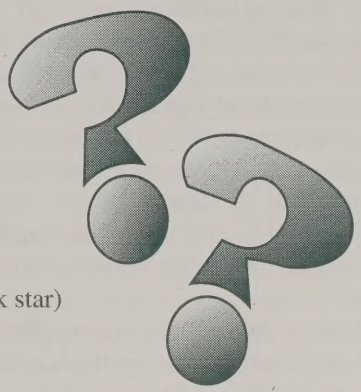
- Babysitting was the most common first job, earning from 25 cents to $1 per hour. One person was paid with new socks.
- Lawn mowing was the second most common first job.
- Other first jobs were:
  - Golf caddy at a country club
  - Lifeguard at a swim and tennis club
  - Maid at fancy high-rise apartments
  - "Ma Bell" service representative
- The most character-building first job had to be picking rocks out of the dirt formed for a farm pond, earning 5 cents per hour in 1949.

MATCHING GAME

Match each fact with an SC-320 employee. Some employees' names may be used more than once; others may not be used at all.

Facts:

1. Tap danced on a Tootsie Roll commercial
2. Licensed to drive 18-wheeler
3. Once worked as a private investigator
4. Avid rollerblader
5. Notre Dame Alumnus
6. Notre Dame "Subway" Alumnus
7. Referees high school basketball
8. Went to high school with Ted Nugent (rock star)
9. Swallowed a goldfish in college
10. Moonlights as a fish farmer
11. Moonlights as Elvis
12. Met Charlton Heston in Vietnam
13. Has been to the Arctic Circle in Finland
14. Finished two "Ride the Rockies" bicycle tours
15. Black powder shootin' "mountain man" enthusiast
16. Likes banana-flavored ice cream



Employees:

A. Judy Bowers
B. John Chambers
C. John D'Angelo
D. John Deuter
E. Jim Ferguson
F. Mike Hengel
G. Gina LeFort
H. Bob Leopold
I. Karen Miranda
J. Terri Morgan
K. Barney Poole
L. Louise Precosky
M. Tom Sadowski
N. Wendy Spencer
O. Doug Spence
P. Carl Zulick

Answers:

1. K
2. J
3. A
4. N
5. I
6. F
7. H
8. M
9. B
10. P
11. C
12. E
13. I
14. M
15. E
16. N

SC-320 CELEBRITIES

The Division of Project Management has a few celebrities, two of which you may have seen performing at Service Center functions:

Emily Alvarado sings and plays guitar in a duo with her husband, Ray. They have been performing professionally since 1965 in Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona. They have performed for Casa Bonita restaurant in Lakewood since 1974.

Judy Bowers was once mistaken for Ava Gardner. The mistaken admirers insisted that Judy (Ava) sign autographs for them, so she did. Besides working as a private eye, Judy also modeled for the *Frederick's of Hollywood* catalog.

Judy Chambers was quite a star in her younger days. She performed as a concert pianist, a tap dancer, and a ballet dancer. She also played cello and violin. She was the spelling bee champion throughout grade school, and became head cheerleader in junior high school. And yes, she swallowed a goldfish as part of her college sorority "hazing."

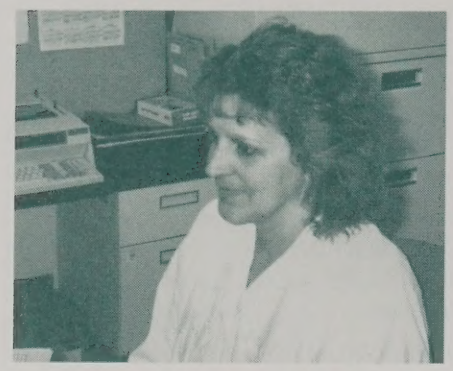
John D'Angelo is the voice of Elvis Presley, at least when he sings. He has studio-recorded dozens of Elvis songs. In addition, he impersonates several country music singers.

Jim Ferguson is not a celebrity himself (except when he's in mountain man gear); however, he's met many famous people. Among them are Bob Hope, Michael Lansing, Charlton Heston, Hubert Humphrey, Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, Nguyen Cao Ky, General Westmoreland, General Abrams, and Eddie Ferhasit. He met many of these people while serving in the military overseas.

Mike Garratt is an avid mountain climber and cowrote the book *Colorado's High Thirteeners* with Bob Martin in 1984. The book is still available in bookstores throughout the State, as well as on the shelves of some BLM employees.

Barney Poole and his sister performed as a tap-dancing team when he was a teenager. They appeared on big band leader Paul Whiteman's *TV Teen Club* show in 1953-54 on WFIL in Philadelphia, and they met "Dagmar." They also appeared on a Tootsie Roll commercial that aired during the show. The dancing duo won third prize in the 1953 Reading Fair Talent Competition.

WORKING TOWARD A DEGREE

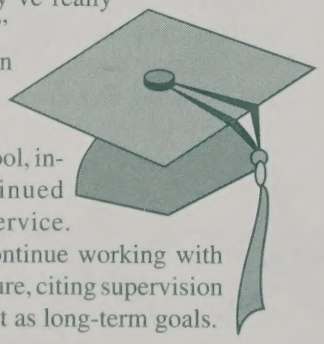


When Kathy Pfeifer took a few classes at Red Rocks Community College, she intended to brush up on her computer and typing skills for work. After 16 years as a homemaker, she never expected she would earn a college degree, especialy while she was working.

But it was at Red Rocks that Kathy heard about a BLM "Stay-in-School" position here at the Service Center. She was hired in September 1991 as an assistant to the SC-320 Division Secretary, a position she has held ever since. While working, she has continued to attend college.

"The flexible hours of my work schedule have allowed me to stay in school," said Kathy. She works 20 hours a week during the school year, and full-time during the summer months. She is now working on an Associate's Degree in Business Administration, which she will complete in the fall of 1994.

In addition to working toward her degree, Kathy especially appreciates the range of work experience she has gained supporting various Project Managers in SC-320. But she is quick to say that the best part of her job is working with the people. "The people here and their continued support make working toward my degree easier," she said. "They've really encouraged me."



Kathy is open to a variety of job options when she finishes school, including continued Government service. She hopes to continue working with people in the future, citing supervision and management as long-term goals.

FOCUS GROUPS GIVE EMPLOYEES A VOICE

The recent review of the IRM functions at the Service Center introduced a "new" way of gathering information. Though the ideas are really not new, they have not been used much within the Bureau or at the Service Center.

During the IRM review, the review team held what is commonly referred to as a "town meeting" to solicit and record input from employees. In late October, when reorganization options were developed, incoming Service Center Director Larry Bembry asked SC-300 employees for additional comments, using a "focus group" process.

Bembry initiated the focus groups, which are commonly used in the corporate world and the Forest Service. All SC-300 employees were asked to participate. The process began with a presentation of the review team's report and recommended options. Employees then formed random small groups, which met over a 2-day period for about 2 hours each. Management personnel met in a separate focus group. The groups discussed and commented on each section of the report, the various options, and other relevant information.

The focus groups generated a large amount of input, which was recorded by employee facilitators. All comments were then consolidated and included in the final report, which was presented to BLM Director Jim Baca on November 8, 1993.

Many employees appreciated the opportunity to participate in the focus groups because it gave them a chance to share their opinions and concerns. In the future, town meetings and focus groups may become a common way of involving employees and giving them a voice in decisions that affect them.

Vice President Gore's National Performance Review also used town meetings and focus groups to gain employee input. A series of focus group meetings were held to address the Service Center's culture, using a process called "futuring." There were four focus groups consisting of six to ten people. Both managers/supervisors and nonsupervisory employees were mixed together in these groups. The results of their discussions can be found in the *Reinventing Government* document for the Service Center, Appendix E, Cultural Focus Groups.

RECRUITING A DIVERSIFIED WORKFORCE

The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 calls for a "Federal workforce which is reflective of the nation's diversity." To effectively serve the public, the Federal Government needs insight into the concerns of all segments of our society. One way to help ensure that the needs of all Americans are considered is through a representative Federal workforce. Much of America's strength flows from its diversity; similarly, a diverse workforce can improve organizational performance. The Federal personnel system, when used creatively and effectively, can be a useful tool to develop a diverse workforce of exceptional quality.

Service Center management has used a number of personnel authorities and procedures to improve the employment opportunities for minorities, women, handicapped individuals, and veterans. These include, but are not limited to, the Stay-in-School Program, the Cooperative Education Program, the Resource Apprenticeship Program for Students (RAPS), and the Volunteer Program. The role of the Division of Personnel is not only to manage these programs, and others, but to work with managers in identifying ways to diversify their workforce.

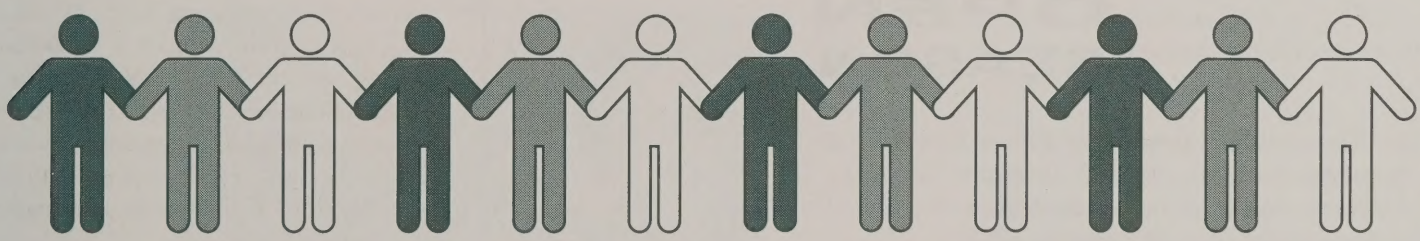
The Stay-in-School Program has as its major objective the employment of needy students, giving them the opportunity to work in Federal agencies so that they can resume or continue their educations without interruptions caused by financial pressures. The Service Center currently employs 10 Stay-in-School students, ranging in age from 19 to 42, from 5 Colorado schools. Stay-in-School students do not count against the Service Center's authorized Full-Time Equivalency (FTE) limit.

The Cooperative Education Program is a planned, progressive, career-related student employment program. A key feature of this program is the noncompetitive conversion of a student from the excepted service into the competitive service after satisfactory completion of the education and work requirements. In 1993, the Service Center employed 15 Cooperative Education students from 10 schools in 4 states. This diverse group of students included males and females, Whites, Hispanics, Blacks, and Asians. They occupy positions in the professional, administrative, technical, and clerical occupations. Cooperative Education students do not count against the Service Center's FTE while they are in the program.

The Resource Apprenticeship Program for Students was developed by Department of the Interior bureaus in Alaska, including BLM. RAPS is designed to create summer apprenticeships for high school/college youths in natural resource agencies. The program is geared towards at-risk students. At-risk students are students who may not complete or pursue their education due to social, economic, or family problems. RAPS incorporates all career fields found within BLM, including natural resources, information resources, financial management, human resources, and clerical. RAPS participants have included all minorities. Since 1987, 240 students have participated in RAPS, including 6 at the Service Center. Two of these students have continued their relationship with the Service Center through the Stay-in-School and Cooperative Education programs. RAPS students are not officially employees of the Service Center, and therefore do not count against FTE.

BLM's Volunteer Program is essential to the success of the Bureau. In FY 92, BLM employed approximately 11,000 paid employees and 21,000 volunteers. Volunteers range from high school students to retirees. The Service Center uses volunteers in a wide range of occupations including natural resources, videography, computer user support, and clerical support. Service Center volunteers have included BLM retirees who wish to continue contributing to the mission of the Bureau; foreign college students participating in internship programs while visiting the United States; and sons, daughters, and cousins of Service Center employees needing work experience to use on a resume. Volunteers do not count against FTE as they are unpaid workers.

For more information regarding these programs, contact Melissa Dukes, Service Center Recruitment Coordinator, SC-631, at 236-6689.



Siobhan Gibson

ETHICS ORIENTATION TRAINING

Just a reminder, *all* Service Center employees are required to receive 1 to 2 hours of Ethics Orientation Training by December 31, 1993! If you have not attended Ethics Orientation Training this calendar year, please contact Siobhan Gibson at extension 6-6701 or Judy Schnittker at extension 6-6667 to schedule a makeup training session.

AUTOMATING REQUESTS FOR PERSONNEL ACTION

The Department of the Interior's paperless Request for Personnel Action (SF-52) process is being phased in at the Service Center. This is a significant first phase of the new Federal Personnel Payroll System (FPPS), which will eventually replace the current PAY/PERS System.

In June, 75 employees were trained using a test database. Since August, Personnel and the Associate Service Center Director have been processing actions from blue SF-52 hard copies submitted by the Divisions. On November 1, the Director's staff and three Divisions were ready to start requesting their own actions through FPPS. Other Divisions will be added in the future.

In addition to the specialist, assistants, and clerks in the Servicing Personnel Office who process actions on the system, there are initiators, requestors, concurrers, and authorizers in the Requesting Office who are users of the system. The initiator is the Staff Assistant who inputs the Request for Personnel Action into the system. The requestor is the Division Chief or a Branch Chief, who requests the action. Mark Whitesell, a Classifier in Personnel, is a concurrer. Mark determines if an action needs to be held for the Position Management Committee for approval or if the action can be forwarded directly to the Service Center Director for authorization. The Director or the Associate authorizes and forwards the action to Personnel. Personnel then finishes processing the action.

After an action has been requested, an initiator or requestor can track who has possession of the action at any given time. Divisions can only track their own actions. The EEO Office, the Budget Office, and Personnel can track all actions from the time the action is initiated. This allows EEO and Budget to see actions and make appropriate plans without actually having to sign and forward an action. Personnel can see what will be coming.

Most actions cannot be backdated and actions must be electronically signed by Bob Walton, the Chief, Branch of Classification and Staffing, before the effective date. Since six people have to forward an action before Bob has possession, requests should be input 2 weeks before the effective date to ensure actions reach Bob in time.

The innovative requesting, routing, authorizing, and tracking process of this new SF-52 system will make the process of requesting personnel actions simpler and more efficient.

HEALTH BENEFITS OPEN SEASON

The annual open season for Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) began November 8 and runs through December 13, 1993. During this period, eligible employees may enroll or change enrollments in their health plan. All elections and changes will be effective January 9, 1993.

If you would like to make a change, registration forms (SF-2809) and Enrollment Guide and Plan Comparison Charts for 1994 are available in the Division of Personnel. The Enrollment Guide and Plan Comparison Charts highlight the major features and costs of each plan. This guide will help you identify the plan which best suits your personal needs.

For further information, please contact Gloria Hildreth, (303) 236-6690, or Judy Schnittker, (303) 236-6667.
For hearing or speech impaired, contact TDD (303) 236-7415.

WHAT IS AVADS?

Johnnye Toney (l) and Deanna Bell-Gann use the AVADS setup in Personnel

Personnel has a lot of walk-in customers who want to use AVADS. If you do not know, you are probably asking what is AVADS? AVADS stands for Automated Vacancy Announcement Distribution System. It is the Department of the Interior's nationwide vacancy announcement system. Most of the Bureaus in the Department use this system to announce their vacancies. Plans are for all the Bureaus to eventually list their vacancies on AVADS.

On some days, almost 40 people come to Personnel to use AVADS. Users can survey a listing of available jobs, then look at a specific announcement, and walk away with a hard copy of any listed vacancy. Users often state it is one of the best automated vacancy systems.

If you are on the Service Center Local Area Network (LAN), you can access AVADS from your own desk. If you or your friends have at least a 2400-baud modem, you can access AVADS from a public bulletin board at 1-800-368-3321. If you need additional information on how to use AVADS, stop by Personnel and talk with Deanna Bell-Gann at the information desk.

STUDENT FEATURED ON TV NEWS

Russell Todaro, a Stay-in-School student here at the Service Center, was recently selected by News 4 (KCNC) to appear on their segment *4 Teachers*. Russell wrote to News 4 because he felt that he had been given a wonderful opportunity at the Emily Griffith Opportunity School and wanted to show his gratitude to both the school and the Service Center.

Joan Keeler was the teacher who was featured in the *4 Teachers* segment. Joan is the Cooperative Education Coordinator at Emily Griffith. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, she advises students on work performance issues (good work habits, job interview techniques, telephone etiquette, how to greet the public, etc.). It was Joan who hooked Russell up with the Service Center's Personnel Office as a Stay-in-School student.

The Stay-in-School program is designed for students who are attending high school, vocational school, or college. The program provides students with a chance to work for Federal agencies so that they can resume or continue their education without being hassled by financial pressures. A participant in the Stay-in-School program must be a full-time student at an accredited school. Recruitment for the Stay-in-School program occurs at all alternative schools, colleges, and universities in the local area, including Metropolitan State College, Emily Griffith Opportunity School, Red Rocks Community College, Colorado State University, and the Community College of Denver.

All applicants must be at least 16 years old; Service Center students in the program range in age from 19 to 42. In addition, applicants must demonstrate financial need and maintain an acceptable school standing.

The Service Center currently has 10 Stay-in-School positions filled and is looking to fill 3 more. Students work as Engineering Technicians, Editorial Assistants, and Computer Assistants. They also serve in clerical positions as Automation Clerks, Personnel Clerks, and Staff Assistants.

Russell honored not only his teacher, but also the Service Center's Stay-in-School Program, when he contacted News 4. The Service Center is proud of Russell for his achievements, and hopes to continue to attract outstanding candidates like him for its Stay-in-School and other student programs.

A News 4 photographer tapes Russell Todaro at work in Personnel.

TSP OPEN SEASON

The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) open season began November 15, 1993, and will end January 31, 1994. During this open season, you may begin contributing to the TSP, change the amount of your TSP contributions, or allocate TSP contributions to your account among the following three investment funds:

1. Government Securities Investment (G) Fund
2. Common Stock Index (C) Fund
3. Fixed Income Index Investment (F) Fund

The TSP applies to employees covered by either the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) or the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). However, there are significant differences depending on the retirement system under which you are covered.

FERS: Under FERS, employees may contribute up to 10 percent of their basic pay each pay period. In addition, FERS employees are eligible to receive agency automatic (1 percent) contributions and may be eligible to receive up to 4 percent additional agency contributions.

CSRS: Under CSRS, employees may only contribute up to 5 percent of their basic pay each pay period. CSRS employees do not receive any agency contributions.

If you would like to make an open season election, submit a completed Election Form, TSP-1 (2/91 or 9/90 version), to the Division of Personnel, Branch of Labor & Employee Relations. These forms are available from the Division of Personnel.

If you have any questions about the TSP, contact Gloria Hildreth at (303) 236-6690 or Judy Schnittker at (303) 236-6667.

GHOULS AND GOURMETS BENEFIT CFC

The Service Center held its annual Halloween costume contest and chili cookoff on October 29, 1993. This year's event included a rally for the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC).

Many employees participated in each contest. Costume creativity abounded as Frankenstein's bride, a Dalmatian, a gnome, a viking, and a belly dancer (to name a few) all made an appearance. Prizes were awarded in several categories. Winners included Jim Ferguson for most disgusting; Sandy Foust for scariest; Kristina Counts for ugliest; Sheryl Schleiger for cutest; Louise Precosky, Lynne Lotvedt, Sol Katz, Janice Lopez, and Steve Barrell for most original; and Barb Guest for funniest costume.

The halls of Building 50 were filled with spicy aromas as several culinary artists perfected their chili masterpieces. Ed Dettman retained his title as "Chili King" by taking first place. Bonnie Hauck, Sandy Romero, and Georgia Griese all tied for second place.

The event provided a fun way for Service Center employees to demonstrate their talents and ingenuity, while encouraging participation in the CFC and collecting contributions for this worthwhile cause.

Engineering Chili

The annual Service Center Chili Cookoff had a new entry this year. The Branch of Building Engineering (SC-673) used this opportunity to show off their prowess in cooking and teamwork.

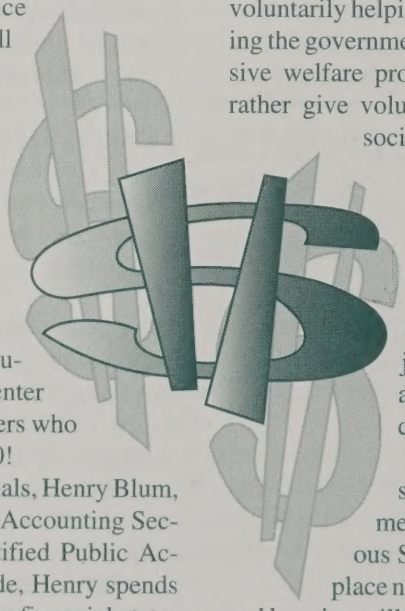
The Branch employees donated food items to be used in their community chili. Getting together the day before the event, the chili was officially engineered and put through the tests to ensure a quality product to be served to Service Center employees.

Teamwork, fun, imagination, and full tummies were enjoyed by all while producing another engineering marvel.

CFC RAISES OVER $30,000

This year's Combined Federal Campaign raised over $30,000 to support both local and distant service agencies. While this fell short of the 1993 goal, it nonetheless represents a significant contribution.

As always, a number of Service Center employees dug deep in their pockets to make very generous contributions. This year, in addition to numerous Leadership and Super Givers, the Service Center had two Super Eagle Givers who each pledged over $1,000!



One of these individuals, Henry Blum, works with the Financial Accounting Section (SC-615A). A Certified Public Accountant, or CPA, by trade, Henry spends most of his time preparing financial statements and taking care of other general accounting duties.

When asked about his generous support of CFC, Henry simply stated that "those who *have* ought to be generous to those who *don't*." Noting that the alternative to voluntarily helping others is generally having the government come in with an expensive welfare program, Henry notes, "I'd rather give voluntarily to help meet our society's needs."

The advantage of having small amounts taken out of each paycheck through payroll deductions also appealed to Henry. "Most of us can't just sit down and write out a $200 or $300 check to charity," he observed.

The CFC tree and flagstone monument commemorating the most generous SC Division will be put in place next spring. The exact time and location will be announced when plans are firmed up.

Many thanks to all of you who contributed to this year's campaign.

PERSONNEL NEWS

New Employees:

Helen Davis, Procurement Clerk, SC-651
Tina LaGrange, Student Trainee, SC-657
John Sloan, Library Aid, SC-653

Separations:

Veronica Garza, Office Automation Clerk, SC-652
Doris Hanley, Supv. Computer Specialist, SC-343
Dena Reish, Office Automation Clerk, SC-652
Robert Zangari, Photographer, SC-675